

## ***5.6 Civil Disturbance Hazard***

A major civil disturbance hazard event has been determined to have a **Low** likelihood of occurrence in Benton County within the five-year planning cycle of this Plan. Therefore, although some hazard characterization information is presented below, no further risk assessment has been performed for this hazard. Additional analyses to further characterize the risks of this hazard and the development of suitable mitigation action items will be conducted in the future based on periodic reviews of this hazard mitigation plan and available resources

### **5.6.1 Nature of the Hazard**

A civil disorder hazard is defined as any incident intended to disrupt community affairs and threaten the public safety. Civil unrest or disturbance is a result of individuals or groups within the population feeling their needs or rights are not being met by society, a segment of it, or the current political system. Civil unrest spans a variety of actions including labor unrest, strikes, civil disobedience, demonstrations, riots and rebellion. Events that could trigger these actions include racial tension, unemployment, unpopular political actions, and a decrease in the supply of essential goods or services. Such events usually occur in large metropolitan areas or areas of relatively high population density. However, there is the potential for civil disorder within some areas of Benton County.

#### **Historical Events**

As recently as 1999, Seattle experienced an episode of civil disturbance that launched the city into the international spotlight. The World Trade Organization (WTO) conference of 1999 was the site of massive demonstrations, where thousands of protesters paralyzed downtown and harassed delegates. Police, outnumbered and unprepared, resorted to tear gas and pepper spray as the confrontation escalated. A state of emergency was declared, including a curfew and the so-called “no-protest zone” that encompassed virtually all of downtown. By the time the tear gas had cleared, more than 500 people were arrested, many protestors, police, and bystanders were injured, and downtown businesses claimed lost sales and property damage costs exceeding \$20 million. As a hazard, civil disturbance can take an enormous toll on property, life, and disruption of services. Areas that have experienced riots often suffer long-term economic consequences.

#### **Characteristics of the Hazard**

Civil Disturbances or Demonstrations can be identified in three (3) categories:

- 1) Peaceful, Non-Obstructive Demonstrations
- 2) Non-Violent, Disruptive Demonstrations
- 3) Violent, Disruptive Demonstrations

The severity of civil disturbance depends on the nature of the disturbance. There is a low, medium, and high range that can be associated with the severity of the hazard of civil disturbance. A localized civil disturbance that involved a small segment of the population, for instance, workers who chose to strike and establish a picket line or some other small scale demonstration, would have a low severity rating. In the instance of a low severity civil disturbance, police might be called upon to insure that protestors did not block traffic corridors or intrude on private

property. A moderately severe civil disturbance would be one wherein the protests disrupt nearby businesses and possibly cause some property damage. In this instance, police intervention would be required to restore order without employing chemical agents or physical force. A severe civil disturbance would involve rioting, arson, looting, and assault.

### **5.6.2 Hazard Assessment**

#### **Hazard Identification**

To be determined.

#### **Vulnerability Assessment**

To be determined.

#### **Risk Analysis**

To be determined.

### **5.6.3 Community Concerns**

#### **Current Conditions**

To be determined.

#### **Ongoing Mitigation**

To be determined.

### **5.6.4 Mitigation Strategies**

To be determined.

### **5.6.5 Resources**

#### **State Resources**

To be determined.

#### **Federal Resources**

To be determined.

#### **Other Resources**

To be determined.